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ABSTRACT

In addition to a teacher's having the enjoyment and appreciation of poetry as an educational objective for his/her students, there are numerous objectives that stress learners becoming proficient in hearing phonic elements, such as in rhyme in verse read and written. For example, a student teacher and a cooperating teacher in a second/third grade heterogeneously grouped classroom first read a self-composed couplet aloud to their students who then brainstormed for rhyming words. After that, students volunteered to write couplets themselves. Students enjoy working with rhyming words and do see the connection between reading and writing. After composing the couplets, students can progress to triplets and quatrains. A limerick can also be read aloud to students, and the teacher can then ask questions about limericks, alliteration, and onomatopeia. Students benefit from listening to and composing rhyming poetry and from word play. Phonics also stresses playing with sounds, phonemes, morphemes, and words. (NKA)

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Phonics and Poetry in the Curriculum.

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CS 216 804

PHONICS AND POETRY IN THE CURRICULUM

Poetry should be enjoyed by pupils. Teachers then need to read poetry orally to learners. Voice inflection should be in evidence, as well as proper stress, pitch, and juncture, in reading aloud to learners. Here, personal means of communication are more effective than impersonal approaches. Thus, the teacher observes pupils in a caring manner when the poetry is being read in a pleasant manner. The model presented by the teacher provides goals for pupils to achieve in liking and wishing to learn more about poetry.

Teachers should write poetry and share their writings with pupils. Pupils then realize that they alone are not the only ones to write poems, but the teacher has also written verse to be shared with otters. An anthology of poetry for children should be on the desk of all classroom teachers. The anthology may be used to read frequently to pupils.What is read to pupils may fit the occasion, such as poems on holidays as these occur. Poetry selected might also relate to animals in ongoing science/social studies units of study. There are diverse genres of poetry and the teacher should choose what might capture pupil interests and purposes.

In addition to enjoying and appreciating poetry as objectives for pupils to achieve, there are numerous objectives that stress learners becoming proficient in hearing phonic elements, such as in rhyme in verse read and written. The balance of this paper will describe student teachers and cooperating teachers whom I have supervised in the public schools and how they guided pupils to value phonics through a study of poetry (See Ediger, 1996, 61-70).

Poetry and Phonics

There are a variety of kinds of poetry that pupils should read and enjoy such as free verse, haiku and tanka among others which are based on a selected number of syllables per line, as well as rhymed poems. I will focus largely on poetry containing rhyme in assisting pupils to identify unknown words in on reading with the use of phonic elements.

A student teacher and cooperating teacher, as a team, whom I supervised in the public schools taught a unit on "Enjoying Poetry." They stressed that these second/third grade pupils in a heterogeneously grouped classroom, first of all, listen to couplets read orally by the teaching team. These couplets were composed by the involved student

teacher and the cooperating teacher. The couplet read as follows:

Nature and the Environment

I love to see the trees sway
winding along their merry way.

Pupils were asked to identify the two ending words which rhyme. Next, they brain stormed additional words that rhyme with "sway" and "way." A long list of words were identified, including the following: bay, day, gay, hay, jay, lay, may, pay, ray, and say. Each of these identified words had an initial consonant as an onset, with "ay" as the rime. Learners also identified several words with two letters as the onset, such as play, slay, stay, flay. Several identified words which rhyme, but were not spelled consistently with the "ay" rime, included the following; they, obey, and neigh. Pupils can become very excited abut words which rhyme. They become conscious about letters individually and in combination making certain sounds phonetically. When reading later on from the basal or from a trade book, pupils comment about different features that words possess, such as rhyme and inconsistently spelled words.

After the word rhyming activity had been completed, pupils volunteered to write couplets. A committee of there pupils wrote the following couplet pertaining to nature:

In the Wind

I noticed a strong wind which was followed by heavy rain
The droplets of rain beat and beat upon the window pane.

A pupil voluntarily wrote a couplet as homework and read it to the entire class:

Storms and Destruction

I read about a destructive tornado with high winds and color blue
Which destroyed houses and other buildings with much adieu.

Pupils enjoy working with rhyming words. Creative minds in an atmosphere of caring and helpfulness does much to encourage pupils to write and read their very own writings in a stimulating manner. Learners then do see the connections between reading and writing. Phonics in poetry and phonics in reading subject matter become one and not separate entities (Ediger, 1997, 135-1 4).

Next in sequence, the student teacher and the cooperating teacher read aloud to pupils a triplet that was self composed.The triplet read as

follows:

The Sight of Cumulus Clouds

Cumulus clouds look like pillows of cotton floating in the sky.
Sometimes, they are white in color and next time dark, oh my!
These clouds then may show calm or become stormy on high.

Pupils observed the triplet on the chalkboard as well as on a large screen with word processor use. They were asked to determine why the above named poem was a triplet. Pupils noticed that the word "triplet" means three and in this case three lines of verse. Learners also noticed all ending words rhyming.

Pupils could either work collaboratively or individually in writing a triplet on nature. The following example resulted as written by an individual pupil:

The Dry Season

Nature does not provide for a yearly/monthly uniform rainfall.
With lack of rain, the parched earth does not hear a call.
Plants grow scantily and there are cracks in the earth's mall.

The two teachers in sequence explained imagery in poetry as a device used by many poets. Examples were given of a simile, such as in the underlined part to show a creative comparison with the unlined words:

1. the cloud was extremely large and white <u>like sheep in a snowy pasture</u>.
2. the tornado looked <u>as if it were a top spinning round and round</u>.

The following examples was given and explained by the two teachers pertaining to a metaphor:

1. the plant on the earth grows <u>weary and tired each day</u>.
2. the animals appear <u>to paint a rosy picture of leisure.</u>

Learners were then asked to add imagery, either similes or metaphors, to a class composed poem:

Hail

Hail falls <u>like baseballs from heaven to earth.</u>
Damaging buildings and farm crops look <u>like nothing at birth</u>.
Who benefits <u>from this zero beginning that has dearth?</u>

Pupils tend to enjoy playing with words in writing poetry which rhymes and contains imagery.

Teachers next read their very own composed quatrain to the class:

A Pond of the Farm

Muskrats dig holes on the bank of the pond
They like to be near cat tails which look like a bond
Swimming and digging, they seem contented and fond.
Around and around, the pond water appears blond!

It was relatively essay for pupils to name the characteristics of a quatrain:

1. it has four lines with ending words rhyming.
2. the four lines are somewhat uniform in length.

Pupils were next introduced to the concept of alliteration. An example provided by the two teachers was the following for alliteration, as a poetic device: the rocky round road was rough. The three words---rocky, rough road---each begin with the same initial sound, an example of alliteration. In sequence, pupils were asked to write a quatrain containing alliteration. The poem could be written collaboratively or individually. The following collaboratively written quatrain illustrated alliteration:

The Picnic

A picnic was held in a rectangular rosy roster
Happy hungry hollow people, but no impostor
Eating and laughing throughout the bright brave day
Hoping to be good, gleeful, gay, and happy, by the way!

The quatrain above has four lines with lines one and two rhyming as well as lines three and four rhyming. The underlined words were discussed and pupils told why these words gave examples of alliteration (See Tiedt, 1983, 332).

Another poetic device was brought into the discussion. The device is onomatopoeia, also called echoic sounding words. Here, pupils were to suggest echoic sounding words which might be placed within the above quatrain entitled "The Picnic." One pupil emphasized that the

word "crunchy" could be placed on the first line to read, "A crunchy picnic was held in a rectangular rosy roster." A second learner stressed that the words "smacking lips" as echoic sounding words might be written in line two to read. "Eating, smacking lips, and laughing throughout the bright brave day. Most pupils in the class felt that was a good choice. As a whole, pupils believed that line four with the word "gleeful" was an excellent choice for alliteration (See Ediger, 1997, 156-167).

Writing Limericks

Edward Lear is a very well known writer of limericks. The student teacher read several of Lear's limericks to pupils in class. Pupils were delighted with these limericks. As a university supervisor of student teaching, I shared a limerick that I had written with these learners. This limerick was typed into a computer with the image enlarged for seeing on the screen. The contents were based on a farm pasture we have on our small acreage in the country, resulting in the following limerick:

The Pasture Land

There once was a pasture with small acreage
The cow crying for her calf with great rage
How quickly the bawling stopped
Her calf sucked milk and mopped
How I hasten to see such care, when running through the sage.

I first read the selection orally to pupils, followed by pupils reading the limerick aloud in unison while looking carefully at each word. Learners requested a rereading.The following questions pertaining to this limerick were asked of pupils:

1. what makes for a limerick? Several noticed that a limerick has five lines. The limerick started with the words, "There once was..." Finally, a pupil noticed that the limerick consists of a triplet (lines one, two, and five rhyme) and a couplet (lines three and four rhyme). Selected pupils noticed the beat and meter contained in the limerick and how it differed from other forms of poetry.
2. was there any sign of alliteration in the limerick? For example, lines two and five contain alliteration.
3. were there any signs of onomatopoeia in the limerick? There was considerable discussion here, pertaining to the words-- rage, bawling, mopped, and sucked.

Pupils then wrote limericks in a committee or by the self. The following is shown here to indicate one of the better written limericks by

a committee of three pupils:

Flowers in a Garden

There once was a patch of flowers
These tulips were covered with bright colors
They happened to be
Where every one could see
In a shady place known as the bowers.

Conclusion

Pupils tend to be fascinated with rhyming words. They tend to notice rhyme and phonic elements in reading and in spelling. Words pertaining to alliteration as well as to onomatopoeia are also noticed. Phonics and rhyme emphasize sounds that letters and words make. Phonics instruction need not be dull and boring, but rather interesting and fascinating. I believe pupils benefit much from rhyme in poetry and word play. Phonics too stresses playing with sounds, phonemes morphemes, and words. Learners need to become fascinated with word study and the power of words within sentences. Uses of alliteration, imagery, and onomatopoeia include the power of word use to encourage learner interest and fascination with rhyme and phonics (Ediger, 1998, 147-156).

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